

State Government Council

Working Session on Technical Architecture

Thursday October 9, 2003

Thursday November 19, 2003

Revised 11-19-03

Summary of Ideas and Discussion

1. Revise the 1909 purchase review process by delegating authority to agencies that have capacity to evaluate technical requirements.
2. Better communication is needed regarding changes that affect other agencies, such as those involving mainframe use or data circuits. Timely communication would permit agencies to conduct strategic planning and be proactive, rather than reactive.
3. Publish an inventory of services performed by IMServices and Division of Communications. Then look for areas of overlap with agencies and discuss whether centralization or decentralization is better on case-by-case basis.
4. Possible categories for evaluating centralization vs. decentralization include:
 - a. Business critical services, which should remain under direct agency control;
 - b. "Utility services", which IMServices should provide;
 - c. Multi-agency services, which require some centralization;
 - d. Security and other issues that transcend any individual agency's reach;
 - e. Highly specialized services, such as network and network support that exceed the technical capabilities of most agencies.
5. The partnership concept is essential.
6. Past efforts at collaboration, such as content management and help desk tools, have failed in part because there is no source of enterprise funding.
7. One potential funding mechanism is a "surcharge" levied on agency's technology bills, which would pay for statewide projects. A governance structure would be essential for choosing and implementing projects. The governance process must include an effective means for reflecting the needs of small and medium-sized agencies.
8. Should the desktop be considered a "commodity" for most users, with greater standardization of hardware, software, and support?
9. There should be an advisory group on enterprise/utility services.
10. We need a definition of "utility" services.
11. Even for "utility" services, agencies need flexibility to meet business requirements.
12. Small and medium sized agencies lack input.
13. IMServices should initiate a two-way discussion with each agency to learn about each agency's needs and future plans and to communicate the capabilities and future plans of IMServices.
14. Agency Technology Plans could be a means to identify areas of common needs and interests, such as imaging. This could be the basis for organizing collective efforts.
15. Holding meetings by sector is another option to identify common needs.
16. Homeland Security concerns may require more attention to issues such as business recovery.

17. Agencies in the Atrium, TierOne and other privately-owned buildings would benefit by gaining access to a fiber-based connection to the state's network.
18. Agencies need better information from DOC regarding changes or problems with the network. For example, DOC should inform agencies if there is a network problem so that agencies do not spend time trying to diagnose the source of a problem. Instant messaging is a good tool for sending out these alerts.
19. DOC and IMServices should explain their respective duties and division of labor between their staffs.
20. DOC and IMServices should explain the level of redundancy that exists for all aspects of the state's network.
21. The state's network is an example of a utility function.
22. The IT planning process is a key opportunity to gather information on shared needs and future issues.
23. We need a governance structure with a steering committee or advisory group to address shared services, including management issues. E-fax is an example.
 - a. The governance process must include an effective means for reflecting the needs of small and medium-sized agencies.
 - b. Formal governance for shared services, with shared funding is important;
 - c. The governance structure should identify shared services and recommend policies.
 - d. The governance structure should include means for moving enterprise issues forward.
24. How do we best take advantage of agency-level work that has relevance to other agencies?
25. There are barriers to effective action that should be addressed. Examples include:
 - a. The RFP process is too cumbersome;
 - b. State statues (such as those dealing with records retention and durable media) are also roadblocks that should be addressed;
26. Valid Service Level Agreements – and a transparent means of determining whether they are met – are essential to providing centralized services.

Summary:

- A. Establish a collective process for identifying issues
- B. Tailor the Agency Technology Planning process to support a statewide view of technology
- C. Provide connection to policy groups (NITC, Legislature)
- D. Develop standards and guidelines to provide direction on specific issues
- E. Evaluate and revise existing processes for acquisition and operation of information technology, including the 1909 review process, in order to support a statewide view of technology
- F. Create enforcement methods beyond voluntary compliance